

10/20/02

ATENT COOPERATION TREATY

PCT

NOTIFICATION OF ELECTION

(PCT Rule 61.2)

From the INTERNATIONAL BUREAU

To:

Korean Intellectual Property Office
920 Dunsan-dong, So-gu
302-701 Daejeon Metropolitan City
Republic of Korea

in its capacity as elected Office

| |
|--|
| Date of mailing (day/month/year) 30 October 2002 (30.10.02) |
| International application No. PCT/US00/27415 |
| International filing date (day/month/year) 05 October 2000 (05.10.00) |

Applicant's or agent's file reference
EL0438PCT

Priority date (day/month/year)
08 October 1999 (08.10.99)

Applicant

E.I. DU PONT DE NEMOURS AND COMPANY et al

1. The designated Office is hereby notified of its election made:

in the demand filed with the International Preliminary Examining Authority on:

25 April 2001 (25.04.01)

in a notice effecting later election filed with the International Bureau on:

2. The election was

was not

made before the expiration of 19 months from the priority date or, where Rule 32 applies, within the time limit under Rule 32.2(b).

| | |
|---|--|
| The International Bureau of WIPO 34, chemin des Colombettes 1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland Facsimile No.: (41-22) 740.14.35 | Authorized officer P. Asseeff Telephone No.: (41-22) 338.83.38 |
|---|--|

PATENT COOPERATION TREATY

RECEIVED

From the
INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINING AUTHORITY

To:

SANTOPIETRO, L.
E.I. DUPONT DE NEMOURS AND COMPANY
Legal Patent Records Center
1007 Market Street
Wilmington, Delaware 19805
ETATS-UNIS D'AMERIQUE

PCT

PATENT RECORDS
CENTER

NOTIFICATION OF TRANSMITTAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION REPORT

(PCT Rule 71.1)

| | |
|-------------------------------------|------------|
| Date of mailing (day/month/year) | 05.02.2002 |
|-------------------------------------|------------|

Applicant's or agent's file reference
EL0438PCT

IMPORTANT NOTIFICATION

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| International application No. PCT/US00/27415 | International filing date (day/month/year) 05/10/2000 | Priority date (day/month/year) 08/10/1999 |
|---|--|--|

Applicant
E.I. DU PONT DE NEMOURS AND COMPANY et al.

1. The applicant is hereby notified that this International Preliminary Examining Authority transmits herewith the international preliminary examination report and its annexes, if any, established on the international application.
2. A copy of the report and its annexes, if any, is being transmitted to the International Bureau for communication to all the elected Offices.
3. Where required by any of the elected Offices, the International Bureau will prepare an English translation of the report (but not of any annexes) and will transmit such translation to those Offices.

4. REMINDER

The applicant must enter the national phase before each elected Office by performing certain acts (filing translations and paying national fees) within 30 months from the priority date (or later in some Offices) (Article 39(1)) (see also the reminder sent by the International Bureau with Form PCT/IB/301).

Where a translation of the international application must be furnished to an elected Office, that translation must contain a translation of any annexes to the international preliminary examination report. It is the applicant's responsibility to prepare and furnish such translation directly to each elected Office concerned.

For further details on the applicable time limits and requirements of the elected Offices, see Volume II of the PCT Applicant's Guide.

REY NOTED

Name and mailing address of the IPEA/



European Patent Office
D-80298 Munich
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Fax: +49 89 2399 - 4465

Authorized officer

Connolly, M

Tel. +49 89 2399-8021



44
PATENT COOPERATION TREATY**PCT**

REC'D 07 FEB 2002

WIPO

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INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION REPORT

(PCT Article 36 and Rule 70)

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| Applicant's or agent's file reference EL0438PCT | FOR FURTHER ACTION See Notification of Transmittal of International Preliminary Examination Report (Form PCT/IPEA/416) | |
| International application No. PCT/US00/27415 | International filing date (day/month/year) 05/10/2000 | Priority date (day/month/year) 08/10/1999 |
| International Patent Classification (IPC) or national classification and IPC H01B1/16 | | |
| Applicant E.I. DU PONT DE NEMOURS AND COMPANY et al. | | |

1. This international preliminary examination report has been prepared by this International Preliminary Examining Authority and is transmitted to the applicant according to Article 36.

2. This REPORT consists of a total of 4 sheets, including this cover sheet.

This report is also accompanied by ANNEXES, i.e. sheets of the description, claims and/or drawings which have been amended and are the basis for this report and/or sheets containing rectifications made before this Authority (see Rule 70.16 and Section 607 of the Administrative Instructions under the PCT).

These annexes consist of a total of 2 sheets.

3. This report contains indications relating to the following items:

- I Basis of the report
- II Priority
- III Non-establishment of opinion with regard to novelty, inventive step and industrial applicability
- IV Lack of unity of invention
- V Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement
- VI Certain documents cited
- VII Certain defects in the international application
- VIII Certain observations on the international application

| | |
|---|---|
| Date of submission of the demand 25/04/2001 | Date of completion of this report 05.02.2002 |
| Name and mailing address of the international preliminary examining authority: European Patent Office D-80298 Munich Tel. +49 89 2399 - 0 Tx: 523656 epmu d Fax: +49 89 2399 - 4465 | Authorized officer Devriese, K Telephone No. +49 89 2399 8309 |



INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION REPORT

International application No. PCT/US00/27415

I. Basis of the report

1. With regard to the **elements** of the international application (*Replacement sheets which have been furnished to the receiving Office in response to an invitation under Article 14 are referred to in this report as "originally filed" and are not annexed to this report since they do not contain amendments (Rules 70.16 and 70.17):*
Description, pages:

1-20 as originally filed

Claims, No.:

1-15 as received on 07/01/2002 with letter of 03/01/2002

2. With regard to the **language**, all the elements marked above were available or furnished to this Authority in the language in which the international application was filed, unless otherwise indicated under this item.

These elements were available or furnished to this Authority in the following language: , which is:

- the language of a translation furnished for the purposes of the international search (under Rule 23.1(b)).
- the language of publication of the international application (under Rule 48.3(b)).
- the language of a translation furnished for the purposes of international preliminary examination (under Rule 55.2 and/or 55.3).

3. With regard to any **nucleotide and/or amino acid sequence** disclosed in the international application, the international preliminary examination was carried out on the basis of the sequence listing:

- contained in the international application in written form.
- filed together with the international application in computer readable form.
- furnished subsequently to this Authority in written form.
- furnished subsequently to this Authority in computer readable form.
- The statement that the subsequently furnished written sequence listing does not go beyond the disclosure in the international application as filed has been furnished.
- The statement that the information recorded in computer readable form is identical to the written sequence listing has been furnished.

4. The amendments have resulted in the cancellation of:

- the description, pages:
- the claims, Nos.:
- the drawings, sheets:

5. This report has been established as if (some of) the amendments had not been made, since they have been considered to go beyond the disclosure as filed (Rule 70.2(c)):

**INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY
EXAMINATION REPORT**

International application No. PCT/US00/27415

(Any replacement sheet containing such amendments must be referred to under item 1 and annexed to this report.)

6. Additional observations, if necessary:

V. Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement

1. Statement

| | | | |
|-------------------------------|------|--------|------|
| Novelty (N) | Yes: | Claims | 1-14 |
| | No: | Claims | 15 |
| Inventive step (IS) | Yes: | Claims | 1-14 |
| | No: | Claims | |
| Industrial applicability (IA) | Yes: | Claims | 1-15 |
| | No: | Claims | |

2. Citations and explanations
see separate sheet

**INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY
EXAMINATION REPORT - SEPARATE SHEET**

International application No. PCT/US00/27415

EP257193 discloses an article as claimed in claim 15 (claims 1-10 in combination with p.3 I.5-55).

Consequently the claimed subject-matter does not appear to be novel.

The subject-matter of claims 1-14 appears to be novel and inventive in view of the documents cited in the search report

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. Use of a composition comprising finely divided particles of (a) an electrically-conductive material; (b) one or more inorganic binders; and (c) tin, wherein components (a), (b) and (c) are dispersed in a liquid vehicle, in the manufacture of an electrically-conductive pattern on a substrate for the purpose of increasing the resistivity of the electrically-conductive pattern.
2. A method of increasing the resistivity of an electrically conductive pattern which comprises utilising a composition comprising finely divided particles of (a) an electrically-conductive material; (b) one or more inorganic binders; and (c) tin, wherein components (a), (b) and (c) are dispersed in a liquid vehicle, in the manufacture of the conductive pattern.
3. A use or method according to Claims 1 or 2 wherein said liquid vehicle is an organic medium.
4. A use or method according to Claims 1 or 2 wherein component (c) comprises metallic tin particles.
5. A use or method according to Claims 1 or 2 wherein component (c) comprises particles of a tin-containing alloy.
6. A use or method according to Claim 5 said tin-containing alloy is a tin/silver alloy containing between about 94 and 99% by weight tin.
7. A use or method according to Claims 1 or 2 wherein said electrically-conductive particles are silver particles.
8. A use or method according to Claims 1 or 2 wherein substantially all particles are in the range of 0.01 to 20 μm .
9. A use or method according to Claims 1 or 2 wherein the total amount of components (a), (b) and (c) is about 50 to about 95% by weight of the composition.
10. A use or method according to Claims 1 or 2 wherein component (a) is present in amounts of about 50 to about 98% by weight of the total solids present in the composition.
11. A use or method according to Claims 1 or 2 wherein component (b) is present in amounts of about 2 to about 25% by weight of the total solids present in the composition.
12. A use or method according to Claims 1 or 2 wherein component (c) is present in amounts of about 2 to about 20% by weight of the total solids present in the composition.

13. A use or method according to any preceding claim wherein the manufacture of an electrically-conductive pattern, comprises applying to a substrate a composition comprising finely divided particles of (a) an electrically-conductive material; (b) one or more inorganic binders; and (c) tin, said components (a), (b) and (c) being dispersed in a liquid vehicle, and firing the coated substrate to effect sintering of the finely-divided particles to the substrate.
- 5 14. A use or method according to Claim 13 which is a screen-printing process.
15. An article made in accordance to the method of Claim 2.

PATENT COOPERATION TREATY

PCT

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

(PCT Article 18 and Rules 43 and 44)

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| Applicant's or agent's file reference EL0438PCT | FOR FURTHER ACTION see Notification of Transmittal of International Search Report (Form PCT/ISA/220) as well as, where applicable, item 5 below. | |
| International application No. PCT/US 00/ 27415 | International filing date (day/month/year) 05/10/2000 | (Earliest) Priority Date (day/month/year) 08/10/1999 |
| Applicant E.I. DU PONT DE NEMOURS AND COMPANY et al. | | |

This International Search Report has been prepared by this International Searching Authority and is transmitted to the applicant according to Article 18. A copy is being transmitted to the International Bureau.

This International Search Report consists of a total of 2 sheets.

It is also accompanied by a copy of each prior art document cited in this report.

1. **Basis of the report**
 - a. With regard to the **language**, the international search was carried out on the basis of the international application in the language in which it was filed, unless otherwise indicated under this item.

the international search was carried out on the basis of a translation of the international application furnished to this Authority (Rule 23.1(b)).
 - b. With regard to any **nucleotide and/or amino acid sequence** disclosed in the international application, the international search was carried out on the basis of the sequence listing :

contained in the international application in written form.

filed together with the international application in computer readable form.

furnished subsequently to this Authority in written form.

furnished subsequently to this Authority in computer readable form.

the statement that the subsequently furnished written sequence listing does not go beyond the disclosure in the international application as filed has been furnished.

the statement that the information recorded in computer readable form is identical to the written sequence listing has been furnished
2. **Certain claims were found unsearchable** (See Box I).
3. **Unity of invention is lacking** (see Box II).
4. With regard to the **title**,

the text is approved as submitted by the applicant.

the text has been established by this Authority to read as follows:
5. With regard to the **abstract**,

the text is approved as submitted by the applicant.

the text has been established, according to Rule 38.2(b), by this Authority as it appears in Box III. The applicant may, within one month from the date of mailing of this international search report, submit comments to this Authority.
6. The figure of the **drawings** to be published with the abstract is Figure No.

as suggested by the applicant.

because the applicant failed to suggest a figure.

because this figure better characterizes the invention.

_____ None of the figures.

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No
PCT/US 00/27415

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
IPC 7 H01B1/16 H05K1/09

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)
IPC 7 H01B H05K

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

WPI Data, EPO-Internal, PAJ, INSPEC, IBM-TDB, CHEM ABS Data

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

| Category | Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages | Relevant to claim No. |
|----------|--|-----------------------|
| X | DATABASE WPI Section Ch, Week 198620 Derwent Publications Ltd., London, GB; Class L03, AN 1986-128289 XP002155642 & JP 61 066303 A (TAIYO YUDEN KK), 5 April 1986 (1986-04-05) abstract ---- | 1-3, 6, 8-15 |
| A | EP 0 257 193 A (FURUKAWA ELECTRIC CO LTD) 2 March 1988 (1988-03-02) claims 1-10 ----- | 1-15 |

Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C.

Patent family members are listed in annex.

* Special categories of cited documents :

- *A* document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance
- *E* earlier document but published on or after the international filing date
- *L* document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)
- *O* document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means
- *P* document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

- *T* later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention
- *X* document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone
- *Y* document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art.
- *&* document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search

15 January 2001

Date of mailing of the international search report

22/01/2001

Name and mailing address of the ISA

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Fax: (+31-70) 340-3016

Authorized officer

Drouot-Onillon, M-C

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International Application No

PCT/US 00/27415

| Patent document cited in search report | Publication date | Patent family member(s) | Publication date |
|--|------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| JP 61066303 A | 05-04-1986 | JP 1653664 C JP 3012789 B | 30-03-1992 21-02-1991 |
| EP 0257193 A | 02-03-1988 | JP 63055807 A US 4894184 A | 10-03-1988 16-01-1990 |

PATENT COOPERATION TREATY

PCT

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

(PCT Article 18 and Rules 43 and 44)

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| Applicant's or agent's file reference 5700-56126 | FOR FURTHER ACTION see Notification of Transmittal of International Search Report (Form PCT/ISA/220) as well as, where applicable, item 5 below. | |
| International application No. PCT/US 00/ 26651 | International filing date (day/month/year) 27/09/2000 | (Earliest) Priority Date (day/month/year) 04/10/1999 |
| Applicant PCC STRUCTURALS, INC. et al. | | |

This International Search Report has been prepared by this International Searching Authority and is transmitted to the applicant according to Article 18. A copy is being transmitted to the International Bureau.

This International Search Report consists of a total of 2 sheets.

It is also accompanied by a copy of each prior art document cited in this report.

1. Basis of the report

- a. With regard to the **language**, the international search was carried out on the basis of the international application in the language in which it was filed, unless otherwise indicated under this item.
 - the international search was carried out on the basis of a translation of the international application furnished to this Authority (Rule 23.1(b)).
- b. With regard to any **nucleotide and/or amino acid sequence** disclosed in the international application, the international search was carried out on the basis of the sequence listing :
 - contained in the international application in written form.
 - filed together with the international application in computer readable form.
 - furnished subsequently to this Authority in written form.
 - furnished subsequently to this Authority in computer readable form.
 - the statement that the subsequently furnished written sequence listing does not go beyond the disclosure in the international application as filed has been furnished.
 - the statement that the information recorded in computer readable form is identical to the written sequence listing has been furnished

2. **Certain claims were found unsearchable** (See Box I).

3. **Unity of invention is lacking** (see Box II).

4. With regard to the **title**,

- the text is approved as submitted by the applicant.
- the text has been established by this Authority to read as follows:

5. With regard to the **abstract**,

- the text is approved as submitted by the applicant.
- the text has been established, according to Rule 38.2(b), by this Authority as it appears in Box III. The applicant may, within one month from the date of mailing of this international search report, submit comments to this Authority.

6. The figure of the **drawings** to be published with the abstract is Figure No.

- as suggested by the applicant.
- because the applicant failed to suggest a figure.
- because this figure better characterizes the invention.

1

None of the figures.

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No

PCT/US 00/26651

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
 IPC 7 B22C7/02 B22C21/14

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)
 IPC 7 B22C

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

EPO-Internal, WPI Data, PAJ

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

| Category ° | Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages | Relevant to claim No. |
|------------|---|--|
| X | FR 2 662 218 A (RAPID SA) 22 November 1991 (1991-11-22) | 1-5, 11, 22-24, 27, 28, 48, 51-53, 55, 57, 59 |
| Y | figures | 49, 50, 66-68 |
| Y | US 3 695 340 A (GROSS JEROME A) 3 October 1972 (1972-10-03) abstract | 49, 50, 66-68 |
| A | EP 0 083 713 A (KLOECKNER HUMBOLDT DEUTZ AG) 20 July 1983 (1983-07-20) figure 2 | 1, 15, 22, 31, 48, 60-62, 73 |

Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C.



Patent family members are listed in annex.

° Special categories of cited documents :

- *A* document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance
- *E* earlier document but published on or after the international filing date
- *L* document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)
- *O* document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means
- *P* document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

- *T* later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention
- *X* document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone
- *Y* document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art.
- *&* document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search

15 January 2001

Date of mailing of the international search report

22/01/2001

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Authorized officer

Hodiamont, S

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International Application No

PCT/US 00/26651

| Patent document cited in search report | Publication date | Patent family member(s) | Publication date |
|--|------------------|---|--|
| FR 2662218 | A 22-11-1991 | NONE | |
| US 3695340 | A 03-10-1972 | NONE | |
| EP 0083713 | A 20-07-1983 | DE 3200193 A DE 3262453 D JP 58119435 A US 4694883 A | 14-07-1983 28-03-1985 15-07-1983 22-09-1987 |

(12) INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(19) World Intellectual Property Organization
International Bureau



(43) International Publication Date
19 April 2001 (19.04.2001)

PCT

(10) International Publication Number
WO 01/27941 A1

(51) International Patent Classification⁷: H01B 1/16, H05K 1/09

(74) Agent: SANTOPIETRO, Lois, A.; E.I. du Pont de Nemours and Company, Legal Patent Records Center, 1007 Market Street, Wilmington, DE 19898 (US).

(21) International Application Number: PCT/US00/27415

(22) International Filing Date: 5 October 2000 (05.10.2000)

(25) Filing Language: English

(26) Publication Language: English

(30) Priority Data: 9923882.6 8 October 1999 (08.10.1999) GB

(71) Applicant (for all designated States except US): E.I. DU PONT DE NEMOURS AND COMPANY [US/US]; 1007 Market Street, Wilmington, DE 19898 (US).

(72) Inventor; and

(75) Inventor/Applicant (for US only): MEARS, Sarah, Jane [GB/GB]; 19 Lansdown View, Kingswood, Bristol BS15 4AW (GB).

(81) Designated States (national): AE, AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BY, CA, CH, CN, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, EE, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, NO, NZ, PL, PT, RO, RU, SD, SE, SG, SI, SK, SL, TJ, TM, TR, TT, UA, UG, US, UZ, VN, YU, ZW.

(84) Designated States (regional): ARIPO patent (GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, MZ, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZW), Eurasian patent (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European patent (AT, BE, CH, CY, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

Published:

— With international search report.

For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the beginning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.

(54) Title: CONDUCTOR COMPOSITION

(57) Abstract: A composition comprising finely divided particles of (a) an electrically-conductive material; (b) one or more inorganic binders; and (c) tin, wherein components (a), (b) and (c) are dispersed in a liquid vehicle, said composition being suitable for use in the manufacture of an electrically-conductive pattern on a substrate.

WO 01/27941 A1

TITLE
CONDUCTOR COMPOSITION

The present invention relates to conductor compositions and their use in the manufacture of components, particularly heating elements, in microelectronic circuits. These compositions are of particular use in the manufacture of demisting elements in heated windows, for example in automotive glazing, particularly automotive backlights.

The use of thick-film conductors as components in hybrid microelectronic circuits is well known in the electronics field. Compositions for the manufacture of such components usually take the form of a paste-like solid-liquid dispersion, where the solid phase comprises finely divided particles of a noble metal or a noble metal alloy or mixtures thereof and an inorganic binder. The liquid vehicle for the dispersion is typically an organic liquid medium, but may also be an aqueous-based liquid medium. Additional materials may be added in small quantities (generally less than about 3% by weight of the composition) to modify the properties of the composition and these include staining agents, rheology modifiers, adhesion enhancers and sintering modifiers.

The metals used in the preparation of thick-film conductor compositions are typically selected from silver, gold, platinum and palladium. The metal can be used either in isolation or as a mixture which forms an alloy upon firing. Common metal mixtures include platinum/gold, palladium/silver, platinum/silver, platinum/palladium/gold and platinum/palladium/silver. The most common systems used in the manufacture of heating elements are silver and silver/palladium. The inorganic binder is typically a glass or glass-forming material, such as a lead silicate, and functions as a binder both within the composition and between the composition and substrate onto which the composition is coated. Due to environmental considerations, the use of lead-containing binders is becoming less common and lead-free binders such as zinc or bismuth borosilicates are now often employed. The role of the organic medium is to disperse the particulate components and to facilitate the transfer of the composition onto the substrate.

The consistency and rheology of the composition is adjusted to the particular method of application which may comprise screen printing, brushing, dipping, extrusion, spraying and the like. Typically, screen printing is used to apply the composition. The pastes are usually applied to an inert substrate, such as an alumina, glass, ceramic, enamel, enamel-coated glass or metal substrate, to form a patterned layer. The thick-film conductor layer is normally dried and then

fired, usually at temperatures between about 600 and 900°C, to volatilise or burn off the liquid vehicle and sinter or melt the inorganic binder and the metal components. Direct wet-firing, i.e. wherein the thick film layer is not dried before firing, has also been used to generate the patterned layer.

5 It is, of course, necessary to connect the conductive pattern to the other components of the electronic circuit, such as the power source, resistor and capacitor networks, resistors, trim potentiometers, chip resistors and chip carriers. This is generally achieved by using metal clips, typically comprising copper, which are soldered either directly adjacent to or on top of the conductive layer.

10 Where the clips are soldered on top of the conductive layer, attachment is either directly onto the conductive pattern itself or onto a solderable composition which is overprinted onto the pattern (an "over-print"). An over-print is generally applied only in the region of the conductive pattern to which the metal clips are attached by solder, which region is generally referred to as the "clip area". The

15 ability to solder onto the electrically-conductive layer is an important parameter in the manufacture of heating elements since it removes the requirement for an over-print. However, the inorganic binder, which is important for binding the paste onto the substrate, can interfere with solder wetting and result in poor adhesion of the soldered metal clips to the conductive layer. The requirements of high

20 substrate adhesion and high solderability (or adhesion of the metal clips to the conductive pattern) are often difficult to meet simultaneously. US Patent No. 5,518,663 provides one solution to this problem by incorporating into the composition a crystalline material from the feldspar family.

An important application of patterned electrically-conductive layers is in

25 the automobile industry, and particularly in the manufacture of windows which can be defrosted and/or demisted by an electrically-conductive grid permanently attached to the window and capable of producing heat when powered by a voltage source. In order for the window to defrost quickly, the circuit must be capable of supplying large amounts of power from a low voltage power source, typically

30 12 volts. For such power sources the resistivity requirement of the conductive pattern is generally in the range of from about 2 to about 5 $\mu\Omega$ cm (5m Ω /□ at 10 μm after firing). This requirement is readily met by conductors containing noble metals, particularly silver which is the most commonly-used material for this application.

35 In certain applications, a conductive composition having a higher resistivity is required. In particular, it is anticipated that the resistance requirements of window-heating elements in automobiles will shortly need to

change since the automotive industry is expected to adopt the use of a 42 and 48 volt power supply in the near future. As a result, the conductive composition used to manufacture the window-heating elements will be required to exhibit higher values of resistivity, typically greater than about $10 \mu\Omega \text{ cm}$, preferably 5 greater than about $12 \mu\Omega \text{ cm}$, particularly in the range from about 20 to about $70 \mu\Omega \text{ cm}$.

A number of different materials may be added to adjust the specific resistivity of a conductive composition. For example, metal resinate such as rhodium and manganese resinate have been used to increase resistivity, as 10 disclosed in US 5162062 and US 5378408. In addition, an increase in the content of precious metals, particularly the platinum group metals such as platinum and palladium, has also been used to increase the specific resistivity. Silver/palladium and silver/platinum compositions can achieve resistivity values from about $2 \mu\Omega \text{ cm}$ (that of a composition comprising only silver and binder) up to around 15 $100 \mu\Omega \text{ cm}$ (for a 70:30 Pd:Ag blend). Systems comprising platinum and/or palladium are, however, significantly more expensive and their use would be prohibitive in applications requiring coverage of a large surface area, such as the window-heating elements used in the automotive industry. In addition, an over-print of a composition containing a high amount of silver (and typically small 20 amounts of filler) is generally required for certain metal blends, such as compositions containing high palladium levels, in order to achieve adequate solder adhesion. Conventional conductive compositions which typically operate at resistivity values of 2 to $5 \mu\Omega \text{ cm}$ and which are comprised predominantly of silver do not require an over-print since acceptable levels of solder adhesion can 25 be achieved by adjusting the levels of inorganic binder.

Other, lower-cost approaches for achieving a high resistivity involve blending large amounts of filler into a silver-containing conductive composition to block the conductive path. Fillers are typically inorganic materials and those commonly used are glass (which may be the same or different as that used for the 30 binder) and alumina (or other metal oxides). However, such approaches tend to result in a loss of solder acceptance and solder adhesion. For example, adequate solder adhesion can be maintained only up to a level of about 10% alumina by weight of the composition but this level is generally too low for an appreciable rise in resistivity. For glass-type fillers, loss of solder adhesion occurs at even 35 lower levels and, again, this level is too low for an appreciable rise in resistivity. In addition, this problem can not normally be ameliorated by the use of silver

over-prints owing to glass migration between the layers during firing, specifically from the conductive coating into the over-print.

A further requirement of the conductor compositions is that they must be chemically durable and resilient to exposure to varying environmental conditions 5 such as temperature, humidity, acid and salt. Compositions comprising large amounts of glass filler, particularly lead-free glass filler, are often relatively unstable to such factors.

An additional consideration is that it is desirable for the resistance of the coating composition to be substantially independent of the temperature of firing 10 used in the manufacture of the patterned conductive layer. For instance, in the case of the application of a conductive composition to a glass substrate, the behaviour of the composition under sintering and melting should remain substantially constant between the temperatures of about 620 and 680°C. Nevertheless, a change in resistance of up to about 10% between these 15 two temperatures, which corresponds to the behaviour of a pure silver composition, is generally tolerated. The use of large amounts of filler to significantly increase resistivity results in compositions which do not generally satisfy this requirement.

A further additional consideration is that it is desirable for the relationship 20 between the resistivity and the amount of resistivity modifier added to the composition to be relatively predictable and/or substantially linear within the target range of desired resistivities. The resistivity of compositions comprising large amounts of filler generally increases in an almost linear manner until a critical concentration is reached. At this critical concentration, the resistivity may 25 rise very rapidly, often by an order of magnitude, when the level of resistivity modifier is increased by only a fraction of a weight percent. As a result, it is difficult to target specific values of resistivity for such compositions.

It is an object of this invention to provide higher-resistivity electrically-conductive compositions which do not suffer from the afore-mentioned 30 disadvantages. In particular, it is an object of this invention to provide an economical electrically-conductive coating composition having increased resistivity while at the same time exhibiting good solderability.

Accordingly, the present invention provides a composition comprising finely divided particles of (a) an electrically-conductive material; (b) one or more 35 inorganic binders; and (c) tin, wherein components (a), (b) and (c) are dispersed in a liquid vehicle, preferably an organic medium.

The composition of the present invention preferably exhibit higher values of resistivity of greater than about 10 $\mu\Omega$ cm, preferably greater than about 12 $\mu\Omega$ cm, preferably in the range from about 20 to about 70 $\mu\Omega$ cm, and more preferably in the range from about 20 to about 50 $\mu\Omega$ cm. In one embodiment, the 5 resistivity is in the range from about 30 to about 40 $\mu\Omega$ cm.

The compositions of the present invention are suitable for use as paste compositions for forming thick-film conductive patterns on a substrate, for instance, by the process of screen-printing. The compositions of the present invention are of particular use as components in the manufacture of windows 10 which can be defrosted and/or demisted by an electrically-conductive grid attached to the window, particularly for use in the automotive industry.

As used herein, the term "finely divided" is intended to mean that the particles are sufficiently fine to pass through a 400-mesh screen (US standard sieve scale). It is preferred that at least 50%, preferably at least 90%, and more 15 preferably substantially all of the particles are in the size range of 0.01 to 20 μm . Preferably, the largest dimension of substantially all particles is no more than about 10 μm and desirably no more than about 5 μm .

Preferably, the components are present in amounts such that the total amount of components (a), (b) and (c) is about 50 to about 95% by weight of the 20 composition, with the liquid vehicle being present in amounts of about 5 to about 50% by weight of the composition. In a preferred embodiment, the total amount of components (a), (b) and (c) is in the range from about 60 to about 90%, preferably from about 70 to about 85% by weight of the composition.

Compounds (a), (b) and (c) generally comprise substantially all of the 25 solid phase material used to prepare the compositions of the invention. Preferably component (a) is present in amounts of from about 30 to about 99.4%, preferably from about 50 to about 98%, more preferably from about 60 to about 90%, and more preferably from about 65 to about 75%, by weight of the total solids present in the composition. Preferably component (b) is present in amounts of from about 30 0.5 to about 40%, preferably from about 2 to about 25%, by weight of the total solids present in the composition. In one embodiment, component (b) is present in amounts from about 10 to about 25% and more preferably from about 15 to about 25%, by weight of the total solids present in the composition. In an alternative embodiment, component (b) is present in amounts from about 2 to 35 about 20% and more preferably from about 5 to about 15%, by weight of the total solids present in the composition. Preferably component (c) is present in amounts of about 0.1 to about 30%, preferably from about 2 to about 20%, more preferably

from about 4 to about 16%, and more preferably from about 6 to about 12%, by weight of the total solids present in the composition.

The electrically-conductive particles of component (a) can be in any form suitable for the production of the compositions of the present invention. For 5 example, electrically-conductive metallic particles may be in the form of either metal powders or metal flakes or blends thereof. In one embodiment of the invention, the metallic particles are a blend of powder and flake. The particle size of the metal powder or flake is not by itself narrowly critical in terms of technical effectiveness. However, particle size does affect the sintering characteristics of 10 the metal in that large particles sinter at a lower rate than small particles. Blends of powders and/or flakes of differing size and/or proportion can be used to tailor the sintering characteristics of the conductor formulation during firing, as is well-known in the art. The metal particles should, however, be of a size that is appropriate to the method of application thereof, which is usually screen printing. 15 The metal particles should therefore generally be no larger than about 20 μm in size and preferably less than about 10 μm . The minimum particle size is normally about 0.1 μm .

The preferred metal for the electrically-conductive component (a) of the conductor composition of the present invention is silver. Silver particles larger 20 than about 1.0 μm impart greater colouring to the composition. It is preferred that the compositions of the invention contain at least 50% weight silver particles larger than 1.0 μm . The silver will ordinarily be of high purity, typically greater than 99% pure. However, less pure materials can be used depending on the electrical requirements of the conductive layer or pattern. In an embodiment of 25 the invention, component (a) comprises a mixture of silver and nickel and/or suitable derivatives. A preferred nickel derivative suitable for use in this embodiment of the invention is nickel boride (Ni_3B). Typically, the $\text{Ag}:\text{Ni}$ ratio will be about 1:1 to about 25:1, preferably at least about 1.5:1 and more preferably about 1.5:1 to about 3:1.

30 Component (c) in the compositions of the present invention comprises tin in one or more of the following forms:

- (i) metallic tin particles;
- (ii) particles of a tin-containing alloy;
- (iii) a derivative of tin which is substantially converted to the metal under

35 the action of heat.

Preferably, the particles of component (c) are metallic tin particles and/or particles of a tin-containing alloy. More preferably, the particles of component (c)

are metallic tin particles. In the embodiment of the invention wherein component (c) comprises a tin-containing alloy, it is preferred that said alloy is a tin/silver alloy, particularly a eutectic tin/silver alloy, particularly a tin/silver alloy containing between about 94 and 99% and particularly about 97% by weight tin.

5 The size of the particles should generally be no larger than about 20 μm and preferably less than 10 μm . The minimum particle size is normally about 0.1 μm . The particles may be spherical or spheroid or irregular in shape, in the form of a flake or a powder, or in any other suitable morphology.

10 The use of metallic tin-containing particles as an additive according to the present invention provides compositions which exhibit (i) high resistivity; (ii) high solder adhesion; (iii) a more uniform rise in resistivity with increasing concentration of the additive in relation to compositions in which large amounts of filler are used to increase resistivity; and (iv) low variation of resistance with firing temperature. In addition, tin is a relatively inexpensive material and is an 15 economical method of increasing resistivity.

Suitable inorganic binders for use in the present invention are those materials which upon sintering serve to bind the metal to a substrate such as a glass (including toughened and laminated glass), enamel, enamel-coated glass, ceramic, alumina or metal substrate. The inorganic binder, also known as a frit, 20 comprises finely-divided particles and is a key component in the compositions of the present invention. The softening point and viscosity of the frit during firing, as well as its wetting characteristics for the metal powder/flake and the substrate, are very important factors. The particle size of the frit is not narrowly critical and frits useful in the present invention will typically have an average particle size 25 from about 0.5 to about 4.5 μm , preferably from about 1 to about 3 μm .

It is preferred that the inorganic binder is a frit having a softening point of between about 350 and 620°C in order that the compositions can be fired at the desired temperatures (typically 300 to 700°C, particularly 580 to 680°C) to effect proper sintering, wetting and adhesion to the substrate, particularly a glass 30 substrate. It is known that mixtures of high and low melting frits can be used to control the sintering characteristics of the conductive particles. In particular, it is believed that the high temperature frit dissolves in the lower melting frit and together they slow the sintering rate of the conductive particles as compared to pastes containing only low melting frit. This control of the sintering 35 characteristics is especially advantageous when the composition is printed and fired over decorative enamels. (Decorative enamels are normally pastes comprised of one or more pigment oxides and opacifiers and glass frit dispersed

in an organic medium.) A high melting frit is considered to be one having a softening point above 500°C and a low melting frit is considered to be one having a softening point below 500°C. The difference in the melting temperatures of the high and low melting frits should be at least 100°C and preferably at least 150°C.

5 Mixtures of three or more frits having different melting temperatures can also be used. When mixtures of high and low melting frits are used in the invention, they are normally used in ratios by weight from 4:1 to 1:4.

As used herein, the term "softening point" refers to softening temperatures obtained by the fibre elongation method of ASTM C338-57.

10 Suitable binders include lead borates, lead silicates, lead borosilicates, cadmium borate, lead cadmium borosilicates, zinc borosilicates, sodium cadmium borosilicates, bismuth silicates, bismuth borosilicates, bismuth lead silicates and bismuth lead borosilicates. Typically, any glass having a high content of bismuth oxide, preferably at least 50% and more preferably at least 70% by weight
 15 bismuth oxide, is preferred. Lead oxide as a separate phase may also be added, if necessary. However, due to environmental considerations, lead-free binders are preferred. Examples of glass compositions (compositions A to I) are given in Table 1 below; the oxide components are given in weight percent.

20

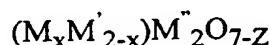
Table 1 – Glass Compositions

| | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I |
|--------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| Bi ₂ O ₃ | 75.1 | 82.7 | | | 78.1 | 94.8 | 73.3 | 73.7 | 69.82 |
| PbO | 10.9 | 1.83 | 43.6 | 0.7 | | | | | |
| B ₂ O ₃ | 1.2 | 1.34 | 4.8 | 26.7 | | | | | 8.38 |
| SiO ₂ | 9.3 | 10.3 | 37.5 | 21.7 | 8.6 | 5.2 | 4.7 | 4.8 | 7.11 |
| CaO | 2.4 | 2.68 | 9.7 | 4.0 | | | | | 0.53 |
| BaO | | | | 0.9 | | | | | |
| ZnO | | | | 27.6 | 3.9 | | | 5.0 | 12.03 |
| CuO | | | | | 7.6 | | 5.5 | | |
| CoO | | | | | 1.8 | | | | |
| Al ₂ O ₃ | 1.1 | 1.22 | 4.3 | 5.7 | | | | | 2.13 |
| Na ₂ O | | | | | 8.7 | | | | |
| ZrO ₂ | | | | | 4.0 | | | | |
| GeO ₂ | | | | | | | | 16.5 | 16.6 |

The glass binders are prepared by conventional glass-making techniques, by mixing the desired components (or precursors thereof, e.g., H₃BO₃ for B₂O₃) in the desired proportions and heating the mixture to form a melt. As is well known in the art, heating is conducted to a peak temperature and for a time such 5 that the melt becomes entirely liquid, yet gaseous evolution has ceased. The peak temperature is generally in the range 1100°C-1500°C, usually 1200°C-1400°C. The melt is then quenched by cooling the melt, typically by pouring onto a cold belt or into cold running water. Particle size reduction can then be accomplished by milling as desired.

10 Other transition metal oxides may also be employed as part of the inorganic binder, as is well known to those skilled in the art. Oxides or oxide precursors of zinc, cobalt, copper, nickel, manganese and iron are commonly used, particularly with substrates other than glass substrates, such as alumina substrates. These additives are known to improve soldered adhesion.

15 The inorganic binder can also contain up to approximately 4 parts by weight basis paste of a pyrochlore-related oxide having the general formula:



wherein

20 M is selected from at least one of Pb, Bi, Cd, Cu, Ir, Ag, Y and rare earth metals having atomic numbers of 57-71 and mixtures thereof,

M' is selected from Pb, Bi and mixtures thereof,

M'' is selected from Ru, Ir, Rh and mixtures thereof,

X=0-0.5, and

25 Z=0-1.

Pyrochlore materials have been described in detail in US Patent No. 3,583,931, the disclosure of which is incorporated herein by reference. The pyrochlore materials act as adhesion promoters for the compositions of this invention. Copper bismuth ruthenate (Cu_{0.5}Bi_{1.5}Ru₂O_{6.75}) is preferred.

30 Traditionally, conductive compositions have been based on lead frits. The elimination of lead from glass compositions to meet current toxicity and environmental regulations may limit the types of binder that can be used to achieve the desired softening and flow characteristics, while simultaneously meeting wettability, thermal expansion, cosmetic and performance requirements.

35 US Patent No. 5,378,406, the disclosure of which is incorporated herein by reference, describes a series of low-toxicity lead-free glasses based upon the

constituents Bi_2O_3 , Al_2O_3 , SiO_2 , CaO , ZnO and B_2O_3 , all of which may be used in the compositions of the present invention.

In a preferred embodiment of the invention, the frit is composition I in Table 1 herein.

5 The components (a) to (c) of the composition hereinbefore described will ordinarily be dispersed into a liquid vehicle to form a semi-fluid paste which is capable of being printed in a desired circuit pattern. The liquid vehicle may be an organic medium or may be aqueous-based. Preferably the liquid vehicle is an organic medium. Any suitably inert liquid can be used as an organic medium.

10 The liquid vehicle should provide acceptable wettability of the solids and the substrate, a relatively stable dispersion of particles in the paste, good printing performance, dried film strength sufficient to withstand rough handling, and good firing properties. Various organic liquids with or without thickening agents, stabilising agents and/or other common additives are suitable for use in the

15 preparation of the compositions of the present invention. Exemplary of the organic liquids which can be used are alcohols (including glycols); esters of such alcohols such as the acetates, propionates and phthalates, for instance dibutyl phthalate; terpenes such as pine oil, terpineol and the like; solutions of resins such as polymethacrylates of lower alcohols; or solutions of ethyl cellulose in solvents

20 such as pine oil and monobutyl ether of diethylene glycol. The vehicle can also contain volatile liquids to promote fast setting after application to the substrate.

A preferred organic medium is based on a combination of a thickener consisting of ethyl cellulose in terpineol (typically in a ratio of 1 to 9), optionally combined for instance with dibutyl phthalate or with the monobutyl ether of

25 diethylene glycol (sold as butyl CARBITOL™). A further preferred organic medium is based on ethyl cellulose resin and a solvent mixture of alpha-, beta- and gamma-terpineols (typically 85-92% alpha-terpineol containing 8-15% beta and gamma-terpineol).

The ratio of liquid vehicle to solids in the dispersion can vary considerably

30 and is determined by the final desired formulation viscosity which, in turn, is determined by the printing requirements of the system. Normally, in order to achieve good coverage, the dispersions will contain about 50 to about 95%, preferably about 60 to about 90%, by weight solids, and about 5 to about 50%, preferably about 10 to about 40%, by weight liquid vehicle, as noted above.

35 The compositions of the present invention may additionally comprise further additives known in the art, such as colorants and staining agents, rheology

modifiers, adhesion enhancers, sintering inhibitors, green-state modifiers, surfactants and the like.

In the preparation of the compositions of the present invention, the particulate inorganic solids are mixed with the liquid vehicle and dispersed with 5 suitable equipment, such as a three-roll mill or a power-mixer, according to conventional techniques well-known in the art, to form a suspension. The resulting composition has a viscosity generally in the range of about 10-500, preferably in the range of about 10-200, more preferably in the range of about 15-100 Pa.s at a shear rate of 4 sec⁻¹, for instance, as measured on a Brookfield 10 HBT viscometer using #5 spindle at 10 rpm and 25°C. The general procedure for preparing the composition of the invention is set out below.

The ingredients of the paste are weighed together in a container. The components are then vigorously mixed by a mechanical mixer to form a uniform blend; then the blend is passed through dispersing equipment, such as a three-roll 15 mill, to achieve a good dispersion of particles to produce a paste-like composition having a suitable consistency and rheology for application onto a substrate, for instance by screen-printing. A Hegman gauge is used to determine the state of dispersion of the particles in the paste. This instrument consists of a channel in a block of steel that is 25 µm deep (1 mil) on one end and ramps up to zero depth at 20 the other end. A blade is used to draw down paste along the length of the channel. Scratches appear in the channel where the agglomerates' diameter is greater than the channel depth. A satisfactory dispersion will give a fourth scratch point of typically 10-18 µm. The point at which half of the channel is uncovered with a well-dispersed paste is between 3 and 8 µm typically. Fourth scratch 25 measurements of >20 µm and "half-channel" measurements of >10 µm indicate a poorly dispersed suspension.

The compositions are then applied to a substrate using conventional techniques known in the art, typically by the process of screen printing, to a wet thickness of about 20-60 µm, preferably about 35-50 µm. The compositions of 30 this invention can be printed onto the substrates either by using an automatic printer or a hand printer in the conventional manner. Preferably, automatic screen printing techniques are employed using a 200- to 325-mesh per inch screen. The printed pattern is optionally dried at below 200°C, preferably at about 150°C, for a time period between about 30 seconds to about 15 minutes before firing. Firing 35 to effect sintering of both the inorganic binder and the finely divided particles of metal is preferably done in a well-ventilated belt conveyor furnace with a temperature profile that will allow burn-off of the vehicle at about 200-500°C,

followed by a period of maximum temperature of about 500-1000°C, preferably about 600-850°C, lasting for about 30 seconds to about 15 minutes. This is followed by a cooldown cycle, optionally a controlled cooldown cycle, to prevent over-sintering, unwanted chemical reactions at intermediate temperatures or

5 substrate fracture which can occur from too rapid cooldown. Alumina substrates are particularly susceptible to fracture resulting from too rapid cooldown. The overall firing procedure will preferably extend over a period of about 2-60 minutes, with about 1-25 minutes to reach the firing temperature, about 10 seconds to about 10 minutes at the firing temperature and about 5 seconds to

10 about 25 minutes in cooldown. For the manufacture of a toughened glass substrate, a controlled cooldown cycle is generally used wherein the overall firing procedure typically extends over a period of about 2 to 5 minutes, with about 1 to 4 minutes to reach the firing temperature, followed by a rapid cooldown.

Typical thicknesses of the thick-films after firing are from about 3 µm to

15 about 40 µm, preferably from about 8 µm to about 20 µm.

The compositions of the invention are primarily intended for use in the manufacture of heating elements in windows such as defogging or defrosting elements in automotive glazing, particularly backlights. The compositions may also be used to incorporate other conductive functions into the window, such as a

20 printed aerial or antenna. However, the coating compositions can be employed in various other applications, including printed circuits and heating elements generally. For instance, the compositions of the present invention may be used as base plates in hot water heating appliances. There is a general need within the electronics and electrical industry for lower-cost heating elements, particularly

25 screen-printable heating elements.

According to a further aspect of the invention, there is provided a composition comprising finely divided particles of (a) an electrically-conductive material; (b) one or more inorganic binders; and (c) tin, wherein components (a), (b) and (c) are dispersed in a liquid vehicle, preferably an organic medium, for use

30 in the manufacture of an electrically-conductive pattern on a substrate.

According to a further aspect of the invention, there is provided a process for the preparation of a composition comprising finely divided particles of (a) an electrically-conductive material; (b) one or more inorganic binders; and (c) tin, said process comprising the step of dispersing components (a), (b) and (c) in a

35 liquid vehicle, preferably an organic medium.

According to a further aspect of the invention there is provided a process for the manufacture of an electrically-conductive pattern, said process comprising

applying to a substrate a composition comprising finely divided particles of (a) an electrically-conductive particles; (b) one or more inorganic binders; and (c) tin, said components (a), (b) and (c) being dispersed in a liquid vehicle, preferably an organic medium, and firing the coated substrate to effect sintering of the finely-divided particles to the substrate. Preferably the process is a screen printing process.

According to a further aspect of the present invention there is provided a substrate, typically a rigid substrate such as a glass (including toughened and laminated glass), enamel, enamel-coated glass, ceramic, alumina or metal 10 substrate, having on one or more surfaces thereof an electrically-conductive pattern, said conductive pattern comprising (a) an electrically-conductive material; (b) one or more inorganic binders; and (c) tin.

The following test procedures were used to evaluate the compositions of the present invention.

15 Adhesion

Copper clips (obtained from Quality Product Gen. Eng. (Wickwar), UK) are soldered to the fired conductive pattern on a glass substrate (dimensions 10.2 cm x 5.1 cm x 3 mm) using a 70/27/3 Pb/Sn/Ag solder alloy at a soldering iron temperature of 350 to 380°C. A small quantity of a mildly active rosin flux, 20 such as ALPHA 615-25® (Alpha Metals Limited, Croydon, UK) may be used to enhance solder wetting and to keep the solder and clip in place during assembly of parts, in which case the flux is applied to the solder using a shallow tray containing a thin film of fresh flux. Adhesion was measured on a CHATTILLON® pull tester Model USTM at a pull speed of 0.75 ± 0.1 inches per 25 minute (1.91 ± 0.25 cm per minute) and the pull strength recorded at adhesion failure. The average value of adhesion failure over 8 samples was determined. The adhesion should preferably be greater than 10 kg, more preferably greater than 15 kg and more preferably greater than 20 kg. The principal failure modes of adhesion are as follows:

30 (a) clip separates from the conductive pattern (i.e. poor solder adhesion).
(b) the conductive pattern separates from the substrate (i.e. poor substrate adhesion).
(c) glass pullout/fracture (i.e. the bonding strengths between the clip and the conductive layer and between the conductive layer and the substrate is greater than the strength of the substrate).
35 (d) failure within the solder.

Resistance and Resistivity

The resistance of the fired conductive pattern on a glass substrate (dimensions 10.2 cm x 5.1 cm x 3 mm) was measured using a GenRad Model 1657 RLC bridge calibrated for use between 1 and 900 Ω or equivalent. The thickness of the conductive layer is measured using a thickness measuring device such as a surf-analyser (e.g. TALYSURFTM, which is a contact measuring device which analyses the surface of the substrate in 2 dimensions using a spring loaded stylus; any change in height will deflect the stylus and this change will then be registered on a recorder, such as a chart recorder; the difference between the base line and average height gives the print thickness). Resistance of the pattern is determined by placing the probe tips at the point where the conductive track meets the solder pads. The bulk resistivity (thickness-normalised) of the layer is determined by dividing the measured resistance for the pattern by the number of squares therein where the number of squares is the length of the conductive track divided by the width of the track. The resistivity value is obtained as $m\Omega/\square$ at any normalised thickness, typically 10 μm .

Particle Size

Particle size in the composition is measured according to ASTM D1210-79 using a large Hegman type fineness of grind gauge.

Chemical Durability

A solution of 1% glacial acetic acid in deionised water is used in this test. The glass substrate (50 x 100 mm) having thereon a fired conductive pattern was inserted into a plastic container half-filled with the test solution. The container is then sealed and left to stand at ambient temperature. The test substrates are removed after 96, 168 and 336 hours, dried and then analysed by a lift test. The lift test comprises application of a 0.75 inch (19.1 mm) wide masking tape (NICEDAYTM) onto the substrate and then removing sharply in approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ second. The results of the lift test are given as the approximate percentage of film area removed by the tape.

The invention will now be described with reference to the following examples. It will be appreciated that the examples are not intended to be limiting and modification of detail can be made without departing from the scope of the invention.

EXAMPLES

35 Series I

A first series of conductive patterns were prepared using the method hereinbefore described. The tin particles used were sub-325 mesh spheroid tin

particles (the particle size distribution D_{50} was 11.5 μm ; (i.e. 50% of the particles are of a diameter below 11.5 μm). The silver particles were a mixture of 50% spherical silver particles (surface area of 0.80-1.40 m^2g^{-1}) and 50% flake silver particles (surface area 0.60-0.90 m^2g^{-1}). The glass used was Composition I in 5 Table 1 herein. The liquid vehicle was ethyl cellulose in terpineol (in a ratio of 1 to 9) combined with the monobutyl ether of diethylene glycol (sold as butyl CARBITOLTM). The substrate was a float glass (non-tempered) substrate. The fired film thickness was from 8 to 20 μm . All parts were fired through a belt furnace with a peak firing temperature of 660°C, unless otherwise specified, with 10 the samples spending approximately 72 s at peak temperature. The total door-to-door transit time in the furnace was approximately 21 minutes.

The resistivity, solder adhesion, chemical durability and resistance/firing temperature relationship of the patterns were measured as a function of composition in accordance with the procedures described above and the results are 15 shown in Tables 2, 3 and 4 below.

Table 2 – Adhesion Strength (W) and resistivity (ρ)
as a function of composition

| Example | Silver (% w/w) | Glass (% w/w) | Tin (% w/w) | ρ ($\mu\Omega$ cm) | W (Kg) |
|---------|-------------------|------------------|----------------|------------------------|-----------|
| A | 80 | 4 | 0.00 | 3.68 | 26 |
| B | 69.83 | 13.66 | 0.00 | 4.27 | 3 |
| C | 62.73 | 20.97 | 0.00 | 5.66 | 1 |
| D | 55.04 | 28.88 | 0.00 | 6.93 | 0 |
| E | 47.57 | 36.57 | 0.00 | 9.49 | 0 |
| F | 39.22 | 45.17 | 0.00 | 15.54 | 0 |
| G | 30.66 | 53.98 | 0.00 | 28.42 | 0 |
| 1 | 79.15 | 4.00 | 0.80 | 5.49 | 31 |
| 2 | 77.46 | 4.00 | 2.40 | 6.84 | 26 |
| 3 | 75.76 | 4.00 | 4.00 | 10.29 | 23 |
| 4 | 73.22 | 4.00 | 6.40 | 16.20 | 20 |
| 5 | 71.51 | 4.00 | 8.00 | 23.46 | 17 |
| 6 | 67.26 | 4.00 | 12.00 | 75.28 | 11 |
| 7 | 63.03 | 4.00 | 16.00 | 314.22 | 10 |
| 8 | 72.00 | 3.60 | 8.00 | 13.11 | 18 |
| 9 | 70.30 | 5.00 | 8.00 | 13.78 | 18 |
| 10 | 69.08 | 6.00 | 8.00 | 14.02 | 19 |
| 11 | 67.86 | 7.00 | 8.00 | 15.48 | 18 |
| 12 | 66.65 | 8.00 | 8.00 | 16.30 | 22 |
| 13 | 65.42 | 9.00 | 8.00 | 16.32 | 20 |
| 14 | 64.21 | 10.00 | 8.00 | 17.68 | 20 |
| 15 | 58.13 | 15.00 | 8.00 | 26.29 | 19 |

Table 3 – Stability of resistance to variation of firing temperature as a function of composition

| Example | Silver (% w/w) | Glass (% w/w) | Tin (% w/w) | R (Ω) | | | | $\Delta R/R_{620}$ (%) |
|---------|-------------------|------------------|----------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|---------------------------|
| | | | | 620°C | 640°C | 660°C | 680°C | |
| A | 80 | 4 | 0 | 3.47 | 3.27 | 3.13 | 3.15 | 9.3 |
| H | 53 | 25 | 0 | 10.03 | 9.32 | 9.10 | 8.91 | 11.2 |
| I | 40 | 37 | 0 | 16.80 | 17.28 | 18.29 | 10.30 | 38.7 |
| 2 | 77.46 | 4.00 | 2.40 | 3.76 | 3.74 | 3.66 | 3.44 | 9.0 |
| 4 | 73.22 | 4.00 | 6.40 | 9.71 | 9.97 | 10.07 | 9.85 | 1.4 |
| 8 | 72.00 | 3.60 | 8.00 | 9.18 | 8.62 | 8.74 | 8.47 | 7.7 |
| 9 | 70.30 | 5.00 | 8.00 | 10.96 | 10.54 | 10.42 | 10.25 | 6.5 |
| 10 | 69.08 | 6.00 | 8.00 | 11.56 | 11.07 | 10.66 | 10.61 | 8.2 |
| 12 | 66.65 | 8.00 | 8.00 | 13.26 | 12.57 | 12.19 | 12.01 | 9.4 |
| 13 | 65.42 | 9.00 | 8.00 | 14.30 | 13.49 | 12.92 | 12.76 | 10.8 |
| 14 | 64.21 | 10.00 | 8.00 | 16.32 | 15.40 | 14.19 | 14.44 | 11.5 |
| 15 | 58.13 | 15.00 | 8.00 | 25.13 | 23.52 | 21.90 | 21.73 | 13.5 |

5

Table 4 – Chemical Durability as a function of composition

| Example | Silver (% w/w) | Glass (% w/w) | Tin (% w/w) | Acid durability (@ 96 hrs) | Acid durability (@ 168 hrs) | Acid durability (@ 336 hrs) |
|---------|-------------------|------------------|----------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| A | 80.00 | 4.00 | 0.00 | pass | fail | fail |
| 1 | 79.15 | 4.00 | 0.80 | pass | 70% | <95% |
| 2 | 77.46 | 4.00 | 2.40 | pass | 60% | <70% |
| 3 | 75.76 | 4.00 | 4.00 | pass | 40% | <50% |
| 4 | 73.22 | 4.00 | 6.40 | pass | 10% | <10% |
| 5 | 71.51 | 4.00 | 8.00 | pass | 5% | <10% |
| 6 | 67.26 | 4.00 | 12.00 | pass | pass | pass |
| 7 | 63.03 | 4.00 | 16.00 | pass | pass | pass |

The data demonstrate that the tin-containing compositions of the present invention have the following advantages in the preparation of conductive patterns:

10 (i) They allow the preparation of conductive patterns which exhibit increased resistivity while maintaining solder adhesion.

(ii) They allow the preparation of conductive patterns which, for a given increase in resistivity, exhibit a smaller variation of resistance with variation of firing temperature.

5 (iii) They allow the preparation of conductive patterns having a greater degree of chemical durability.

(iv) They allow the preparation of conductive compositions in which the resistivity versus the amount of resistivity modifier is more predictable and/or linear within the target range of desired resistivities.

10 Series II

A second series of conductive patterns was prepared by the method described for Series I except that the tin particles of Series I were replaced either with tin particles having a particle size distribution D_{50} of 9.5 μm or with particles of tin/silver alloy (97% tin) having a particle size distribution D_{50} of 9.5 μm . The 15 properties of the conductive patterns were measured and the data are presented in Table 5 below.

Table 5 – Adhesion strength and resistivity of tin-containing and tin/silver alloy-containing compositions

| Example | Silver (% w/w) | Glass (% w/w) | Tin (% w/w) | Alloy (% w/w) | ρ ($\mu\Omega\text{ cm}$) | W (Kg) |
|---------|-------------------|------------------|----------------|------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------|
| 16 | 60.3 | 9.7 | 13.8 | - | 131 | 10 |
| 17 | 60.3 | 9.7 | - | 13.8 | 123 | 11 |

20

The data demonstrate that a tin/silver alloy allows the preparation of conductive patterns which exhibit increased resistivity while maintaining solder adhesion.

Series III

25 A third series of conductive patterns was prepared by the method described for Series I except that the tin particles of Series I were replaced with tin particles having a particle size distribution D_{50} of 12.8 μm . The properties of the conductive patterns were measured and the data are presented in Table 6 below.

Table 6 – Adhesion strength and resistivity of tin-containing compositions

| Example | Silver (% w/w) | Glass (% w/w) | Tin (% w/w) | ρ ($\mu\Omega$ cm) | W (Kg) |
|---------|-------------------|------------------|----------------|-----------------------------|-----------|
| 18 | 61.57 | 11.47 | 9.47 | 38.45 | 14 |
| 19 | 57.85 | 15.00 | 8.90 | 50.12 | 14 |
| 20 | 57.23 | 15.60 | 8.80 | 58.83 | 18 |
| 21 | 55.76 | 16.99 | 8.58 | 61.07 | 20 |
| 22 | 53.47 | 19.17 | 8.22 | 68.46 | 19 |
| 23 | 51.76 | 20.79 | 7.96 | 89.48 | 16 |
| 24 | 49.40 | 23.04 | 7.60 | 115.58 | 13 |

The data provide further evidence that the tin-containing compositions of
5 the present invention allow the preparation of conductive patterns which exhibit increased resistivity while maintaining solder adhesion.

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A composition comprising finely divided particles of (a) an electrically-conductive material; (b) one or more inorganic binders; and (c) tin, 5 wherein components (a), (b) and (c) are dispersed in a liquid vehicle.
2. A composition according to Claim 1 wherein said liquid vehicle is an organic medium.
3. A composition according to Claim 1 wherein component (c) comprises metallic tin particles.
- 10 4. A composition according to Claim 1 wherein component (c) comprises particles of a tin-containing alloy.
5. A composition according to Claim 4 said tin-containing alloy is a tin/silver alloy containing between about 94 and 99% by weight tin.
- 15 6. A composition according to Claim 1 wherein said electrically-conductive particles are silver particles.
7. A composition according to Claim 1 wherein substantially all particles are in the range of 0.01 to 20 μm .
8. A composition according to Claim 1 wherein the total amount of components (a), (b) and (c) is about 50 to about 95% by weight of the 20 composition.
9. A composition according to Claim 1 wherein component (a) is present in amounts of about 50 to about 98% by weight of the total solids present in the composition.
10. A composition according to Claim 1 wherein component (b) is present 25 in amounts of about 2 to about 25% by weight of the total solids present in the composition.
11. A composition according to Claim 1 wherein component (c) is present in amounts of about 2 to about 20% by weight of the total solids present in the composition.
- 30 12. A composition according to Claim 1 for use in the manufacture of an electrically-conductive pattern on a substrate.
13. A process for the manufacture of an electrically-conductive pattern, said process comprising applying to a substrate a composition comprising finely divided particles of (a) an electrically-conductive material; (b) one or more 35 inorganic binders; and (c) tin, said components (a), (b) and (c) being dispersed in a liquid vehicle, and firing the coated substrate to effect sintering of the finely-divided particles to the substrate.

14. A process according to Claim 13 which is a screen-printing process.
15. An article comprising a substrate having on one or more surfaces thereof an electrically-conductive pattern, said conductive pattern comprising
 - (a) an electrically-conductive material;
 - (b) one or more inorganic binders; and
 - 5 (c) tin.